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SUBJECT: MULTI-HOUR MUBARAK INTERVIEW TO AIR STARTING APRIL 24

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1. (SBU) A multi-hour interview with President Mubarak will be aired over three consecutive days on Egypt Channel One starting on the evening of April 24. The regional Arabic news channel Al-Arabiya has also bought the broadcast rights and will be airing it at the same time. The interview was conducted by the prominent journalist/media tycoon Imad Adeeb, who is also rumored to act as an informal media advisor to Mubarak. The interview was "directed" by Sherif Arafa, one of the most famous directors in contemporary Egyptian cinema.

2. (SBU) While the interview is apparently principally focused on Mubarak's "historic recollections," including his accounts of the wars of 1967 and 1973, there has already been some speculation in the Egyptian media, and gossip in Cairo salons, that the interview contains some sort of major announcement. Speculation has centered on the following possibilities:

- that Mubarak will step down as head of the ruling NDP;
- that Mubarak will announce his intention to seek a fifth term of office this fall;
- that he will announce that he does not intend to run;
- that he will appoint a Vice President or announce a running mate for his ticket; or
- that there will be no surprises at all.

3. (SBU) Comment: We believe it unlikely that the President would use a taped interview, as opposed to a live speech, as a means to make a surprise announcement. However, we cannot rule out this possibility. In any case, we do expect that, in the course of a lengthy interview, which we understand will run up to nine hours in total, that Mubarak will have some interesting things to say, which we will report if warranted. End comment.

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